

Jeffrey Dorfman Presentation Notes

- Preserving open space helps create revenues for the municipality by increasing the tax base, and helps create a place that people want to live.
- Parks increase the value of surrounding properties which helps create more revenues for the town. Parks also provide free environmental amenities, and attract workers to an area by providing a good quality of life.
- Extensive development is thought to be good, but it is costly to the municipality which means to higher taxes.
- A community needs revenues to exceed expenditures in order for growth to pay for itself.
- Residential uses do not pay their way in taxes. Commercial uses pay almost three times their way in taxes. Commercial uses overcharge their customers to help make up for residential loss in revenues.
- The less land development occurs on, the less the cost to serve that piece of land will be.
- Developing areas contiguous to existing developed areas will cost less to service than “leap frog development”.
- Density is good, minimum lot sizes are not.
- Lower density development causes service costs to go up. The community loses their open space and rural feel. It has less quality of life to attract new workers.
- Workers decide where to live and then businesses locate there.

- Infill development helps lower service costs.
- A two bedroom apartment has the lowest service costs. Less kids with a good value.
- In Westfield, for the town to break even you need a house between 200,000 to 400,000 of assessed value. The range of break even points for schools is 300,000- 750,000 dollars. Commercial uses will help reduce these break even costs. Commercial uses subsidize the residential uses. Some residential areas will subsidize other residential areas that don't break even. In Westfield, some of the lower priced housing is subsidizing the more expensive homes to break even in school taxes.
- When you use conservation subdivisions you save on service costs, because the lots are closer together. The open space provided creates a high quality of life. You spend less money for stormwater management costs.
- You must make sure to permanently preserve open spaces in conservation subdivisions by using legal means such as land trusts.
- A 2:1 commercial to residential ratio is needed to make residential development break even. This is hard to get. Businesses need housetops to prosper so this ratio can't be reached. Industrial development helps even out this ratio.
- Use incentives to get the types of development you want, make it hard for developers to do what you don't want.
- Use your infrastructure to steer growth. If you don't want an area to develop don't extend services to that area.
- Lower density and spread out growth = higher taxes because the development doesn't pay for itself.
- Industrial development should locate in industrial parks. Encourage clean, themed industrial parks.

- Industrial park needs a big tenant and access to an airport.
- The town should invest in a site selection consultant to determine where to locate commercial and industrial areas.
- Higher density areas have higher levels of retail. Retail can steal from other jurisdiction's housetops. Don't let other jurisdictions steal your retail dollars. The national average is 32 square feet of retail per person.
- Make a conservation subdivision overlay district to encourage developers to go that route. Lots of conservation subdivisions pay for themselves. Some have equestrian trails and common boarding facilities.
- People will come to your community no matter what, if it is attractive. You can't stop them from coming. If you use conservation subdivisions, you can house the people and still keep open land.
- There are many different break even points: County, township, town, schools etc. There is no specific break even point per subdivision.